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EXAMINER

DEXTER, CLARK F

ART UNIT

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PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.



### DETAILED ACTION

1. The amendment filed on August 17, 2009 has been entered.

#### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

3. Claims 1-3, 5-7 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rufli, pn 811,332 in view of Brough et al., pn 4,638,440.

Regarding claims 1-3 and 5-7, Rufli discloses a device with almost every structural limitation of the claimed invention as follows:

- a path (e.g., between 27 and 11) for the products, extending from a product and trimmings entry position and a product delivery position, the trimmings being removed from the path between said entry position and said delivery position (i.e., the device of Rufli is fully capable of performing such a function), and said path being constructed and arranged to receive said trimmings and said products aligned in a row extending substantially parallel to a direction of advancement from said entry position to said delivery position (i.e., the device of Rufli is fully capable of performing such a function);

- extending along said path, a movable flexible member (e.g., 27) to retain and move the products and the trimmings (e.g., the device of Rufli is fully capable of meeting this limitation, particularly given the appropriately configured workpiece/product, such as a “soft” workpiece that is able to be deformed and pressed into the channels formed by features 32 to contact member 27) and an opposite longitudinal fixed element (e.g., 11) to retain said trimmings extending along said path parallel to a first branch of said flexible member, wherein said fixed longitudinal element is spaced from said first branch of said flexible member so as to allow the products to advance in contact with said flexible member (e.g., with at least 28) and with said fixed longitudinal element, said contact being such to provide friction force between said flexible member and the products and the trimmings, and sliding friction between said fixed element and said products and said trimmings (e.g., the device of Rufli is fully capable of meeting this limitation, particularly given the appropriately configured workpiece/product);

- at least one pusher (e.g., 16) movable along a feed trajectory, to feed the series of products with the trimmings to said path wherein the pusher is constructed and arranged to feed simultaneously a series of the products and the trimmings, including a lead trim and a trailing trim, while in contact with each other and aligned in said row parallel to the direction of advancement between said flexible member and said fixed longitudinal element (i.e., the device of Rufli is fully capable of performing such a function); wherein said feed trajectory of the pusher intersects the path of the products between said flexible member and said fixed longitudinal element, overlapping in a final stretch (e.g., in the same manner as the present invention) of the path of the products in contact with said flexible member and said fixed longitudinal element;

[claim 2] wherein said products are rolls of wound web material and said trimmings are head and tail trimmings produced by cutting rolls or logs (this claim is directed to the workpiece/product which is not part of the claimed invention);

[claim 6 (from 2)] wherein the fixed longitudinal element and the first branch of the flexible member are operatively spaced relative to one another so as to receive rolls of wound web material and trimmings therefrom (e.g., the device of Rufli is fully capable of meeting this limitation, particularly given the appropriately configured workpiece/product);

[claim 3] wherein said fixed longitudinal element is at a lower height than said flexible member (e.g., see Fig. 2);

[claim 5 (from 3)] wherein said first branch of the flexible member is approximately vertically overlapping said fixed longitudinal element (e.g., see Fig. 2);

[claim 7] wherein said flexible member extends upstream of said fixed longitudinal element, in relation to the a direction of feed of the products (e.g., as viewed in Fig. 2, element 27 extends to the right which is an upstream direction of element 11 in relation to a direction of feed of the workpieces/products, and in particular, element 27 extends upstream of element 11 when element 11 is fixed in the raised position (shown in phantom in Fig. 2));

[claim 22] wherein said fixed longitudinal element and said flexible member are positioned on opposite sides of a vertical median plane of symmetry of the products fed along said path; distance between said fixed longitudinal element and said flexible member in a plan projection being adjustable to handle products of variable diameters when received and fed along said path (e.g., the device of Rufli is fully capable of meeting this limitation as best understood, particularly given the appropriately configured workpiece/product); and the dimension and form of said pusher are such that during action of said pusher to feed the products to said path between the flexible member and the fixed longitudinal element the pusher does not interfere with said fixed longitudinal element and said flexible member.

Regarding claim 24, Rufli discloses a device with every structural limitation of the claimed invention as follows:

- a path (e.g., between 27 and 11) for the products, extending from a product and trimmings entry position and a product delivery position, the trimmings being removed from the path between said entry position and said delivery position (i.e., the device of Rufli is fully capable of performing such a function), and said path being constructed and arranged to receive said trimmings and said products aligned in a row extending substantially parallel to a direction of advancement from said entry position to said delivery position (i.e., the device of Rufli is fully capable of performing such a function);

- extending along said path, a movable flexible member (e.g., 27) to retain and move the products and the trimmings (e.g., the device of Rufli is fully capable of meeting this limitation, particularly given the appropriately configured workpiece/product, such as a “soft” workpiece that is able to be deformed and pressed into the channels formed by features 32 to contact member 27) and an opposite longitudinal fixed element (e.g., 11) to retain said trimmings extending along said path parallel to a first branch of said flexible member, wherein said fixed longitudinal element is positioned and spaced from said first branch of said flexible member so that the flexible member contacts the trimmings and the products on a top surface thereof and the fixed longitudinal element contacts these trimmings and products on another surface thereof opposite the top surface so as to allow the products to advance in contact with said flexible member (e.g., with at least 28) and with said fixed longitudinal element;

- at least one pusher (e.g., 16) movable along a feed trajectory, to feed the series of products with the trimmings to said path; wherein the pusher is constructed and arranged to feed simultaneously a series of the products and the trimmings, including a

lead trim and a trailing trim, while in contact with each other and aligned in said row parallel to the direction of advancement between said flexible member and said fixed longitudinal element (i.e., the device of Rufli is fully capable of performing such a function); wherein said feed trajectory of the pusher intersects the path of the products between said flexible member and said fixed longitudinal element, overlapping in a final stretch (e.g., in the same manner as the present invention) of the path of the products in contact with said flexible member and said fixed longitudinal element; and wherein said flexible member and said fixed longitudinal element are arranged relative to one another to cause the trimmings to overturn due to an overturning torque applied thereon by said flexible member and said fixed longitudinal element (i.e., the last limitation does not clearly set forth any additional structure, and Rufli discloses structure that is “arranged relative to one another” such that the device of Rufli is fully capable of performing such a function).

**Rufli lacks:**

[from claims 1 and 24] wherein said flexible member has a feed speed, along said path, greater than a feed speed imparted on the products by said at least one pusher.

However, the Examiner takes Official notice that it is old and well known in the art to provide material conveyors of different speeds (or variable speeds) for various well known benefits including adjusting the spacing between work pieces. For example, it is old and well known in the art to decrease the speed of a first conveyor leading to a second, faster conveyor to increase spacing between the work pieces, and to increase



the speed of the first conveyor relative to the second conveyor to reduce the spacing between work pieces. Brough et al. provides just one of many known examples wherein this particular configuration includes a pusher in the form of a first conveyor (e.g., 12) that feeds workpieces to a flexible member in the form of a second conveyor (e.g., 20), wherein the second conveyor is operable at a relatively high speed. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to provide conveyors (e.g., including a movable flexible member and a pusher) having the claimed relative speeds to gain the well known benefits including those described above.

Further, in the alternative regarding claim 22, if it is argued that Rufli does not disclose adjustable structure that meets the limitation “distance between said fixed longitudinal element and said flexible member in a plan projection being adjustable”, the Examiner takes Official notice that such adjustable structure is old and well known in the art and provides various well known benefits including adaptability to various kinds/dimensions of workpieces. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to provide such adjustable structure on the device of Rufli to gain the well known benefits including that described above.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

4. Claims 9 and 17-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rufli, pn 811,332.

Rufli discloses a device with almost every structural limitation of the claimed invention but lacks:

[claim 9] wherein spacing between the flexible member and the fixed longitudinal element is adjustable;

[claim 17] wherein said fixed longitudinal element comprises a synthetic material with a low friction coefficient;

[claim 18 (from 17)] wherein said synthetic material is polytetrafluoroethylene (Teflon);

[claim 19] wherein said fixed longitudinal element has a laminar extension, with a rounded surface in contact with the products;

[claim 20 (from 19)] wherein said fixed longitudinal element has a reduced height in proximity to the product and trimmings entry position.

Regarding claim 9, the Examiner takes Official notice that it is old and well known in the art to provide a workpiece supports and conveyors with variable spacing therebetween for various well known benefits including facilitating the processing of different sized work pieces. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to provide such a variable spacing support/conveyor configuration to gain the well known benefits including that described above.

Regarding claims 17-20, the Examiner takes Official notice that such workpiece support configurations are old and well known in the art and provide various well known benefits including ease of manufacture, ease of handling and reduced wear/friction characteristics. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the

art to provide such a longitudinal element configuration on the apparatus of Rufli for the well known benefits including those described above.

### ***Response to Arguments***

5. Applicant's arguments filed August 17, 2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

On pages 10-14 of the subject response, applicant provides numerous arguments, most directed to the workpiece and how it cooperates with the structure of the claimed invention. However, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's position is not that the prior art performs the same function as the disclosed invention, but rather that the prior art teaches or fairly suggests all of the structure of the claimed invention. The only structural difference between the prior art and the claimed invention is that the prior art does not explicitly state whether the conveyors 15 and 27 operate at the same speeds or at different speeds. It is noted that Rufli only discloses that the conveyors are "driven in a definitely-timed action the one feed-belt with respect to the other." Thus, the relative speeds of the feed belts are not explicitly disclosed. However, it is respectfully submitted that load conveyors (i.e., conveyors used to load a machine for an operation including a cutting operation), wherein the load conveyor is operated at a slower speed than the machine conveyor, are known in the art and provide various well known benefits as described in the prior art rejection above. Further, one example of such a conveyor configuration has now been cited to support the taking of Official notice.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that for at least the above reasons, the prior art rejection must be maintained.

### ***Conclusion***

6. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Clark F. Dexter whose telephone number is (571)272-4505. The examiner can normally be reached on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Boyer D. Ashley can be reached on (571)272-4502. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3724

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

**/Clark F. Dexter/  
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3724**

cfd  
December 11, 2009